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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a summary of the policies and practices that have governed the accessioning and use of artifacts in the National Archives chiefly over the last decade, and it offers recommendations for the prospective relocation and utilization of artifacts at Archives II. The report is organized around three major headings: a treatment of the theoretical understanding of artifacts management at the National Archives; a general categorization of the types of artifacts in the custody of the Office of the National Archives; and an examination of the storage considerations affecting these material objects, particularly with reference to those objects housed in Archives II. The National Archives' custodial units are identified throughout the report by the organizational symbols used before the extensive reorganization of October 1988. (MAB)

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ARTIFACTS AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES: A SUMMARY OF PAST PRACTICES, PRESENT USES, AND PROSPECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

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The following represents a summary of the policies and practices that have governed the accessioning and use of artifacts in the National Archives chiefly over the last decade, and offers recommendations relating to the prospective relocation and utilization of artifacts at Archives II. The essay is organized around three major headings: a treatment of the theoretical understanding of artifacts by scholars and a review of the administrative background of artifacts management at the National Archives, a general categorization of the types of artifacts in the custody of the Office of the National Archives (NN), and an examination of the storage considerations affecting these material objects--particularly with reference to Archives II. Throughout the text, I have identified NN custodial units by means of the organizational symbols used before the extensive NN reorganization of October 1988.

A substantial part of the problem has resulted from difficulty in clearly identifying and defining artifacts. Archivists have expressed several different viewpoints. For example, Dr. Wilcomb E. Washburn, the former Curator of the Smithsonian Institution's Division of Political History of the National Museum of American History, in the April 1964 issue of The American Archivist, established a close theoretical relationship between what he called "manufacts" (or museum objects) and manuscripts. He rejected as "unjustifiable" the distinction drawn between "idea-oriented" scholars and "object-oriented" scholars--between the written word and the material

object. Other writers have reinforced or refined his views. In a provocative and informative essay, "Clio in the Raw: Archival Materials and the Teaching of History," Hugh H. Taylor, the former Director of the Historical Branch of the Public Archives of Canada, in the July/October 1972 issue of The American Archivist, declared that "a document is an artifact--a unique creation brought into being for a specific purpose and dependent for its effect upon the arrangement of ink on paper." Taylor also emphasized the special physical characteristics or properties of a document which significantly enhanced the total meaning of the message conveyed by the textual medium--those inherent qualities affording the reader or researcher a vicarious participation in the recorded historical event or described transaction. Taylor agreed with Washburn that a manuscript could have an objectively artifactual quality or character, but he rejected the idea that an artifact necessarily has intrinsic documentary value or informational significance.

More speculative yet were the views of Dr. Frank Burke, formerly of the Library of Congress and more recently the Acting Archivist of the United States. In an article, "The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States," published in the Winter 1981 issue of The American Archivist, Burke also accepted the view that a textual document can have artifactual quality or value, though he carefully distinguished the latter relationship from the artifactual values of those objects housed in museums and art galleries. Burke raised a number of questions concerning

the relationship between a document and an artifact, the difference between information and the medium bearing such information, and the distinction between original documents as basically "craft artifacts" and the significant and reproducible information impressed upon those documents. Burke asked if the Declaration of Independence (variously termed "an artifact" and a "non-operative curiosity") should "be in the Smithsonian along with the Hope Diamond and the Spirit of St. Louis?" Without definitely answering his own question, Burke nevertheless suggested that archival institutions have come to form "great reliquaries, rather than information centers."

In addition to weighing conceptual and theoretical considerations, archivists should consider the practical question of whether National Archives artifacts constitute federal records. According to the Federal Records Act of 1950, as amended in 1980 (44 U.S.C. 3301), federal records are defined as "books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics" made or received by a federal agency and preserved to document its organization, functions, policies, and operations. The language of the statute excludes a few specific categories of materials from this definition, particularly library and museum materials preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes. The definition raises serious problems of interpretation. The exclusionary categories of the records act are specifically identified, but other classes of nonrecord

materials are not so clearly established. For example, the Disposition of Federal Records Handbook (1981 edition) has stated that nonrecord materials **may** also include "Physical exhibits, artifacts, and material objects lacking documentary values". Should archivists construe this to mean that to be classified as federal records, artifacts need only have distinctive documentary values, even if they do not constitute authentic documentary materials?

Uncertain, I consulted with Gary Brooks of the Legal Services Staff (NSL). He drew a sharp, albeit not rigidly exclusive, distinction between "artifacts" and "federal records." Differentiating the two terms primarily on the basis of the official informational content retained in or reflected by a material object or textual record, Brooks maintained that the "documentary evidence" of federal agency activity that a three-dimensional object has or reveals forms the critical standard by which an artifact should be considered as a federal record. He explained that an artifact could have significant historical value, yet not constitute a federal record. An artifact's format or medium should not be the basis of defining an artifact as a federal record. Rather, an object's message should represent the definitive criterion, irrespective of the format. Otherwise, Brooks asserted the view that in general artifacts are not federal records--an opinion based on an important ruling made by a federal district court in Nichols v. United States, 325 F. Supp. 130 (D. Kansas 1971). Specifically, the United States

District Court of Kansas ruled that the 1950 Federal Records Act designation "documentary materials" excluded the various material objects connected with the Kennedy assassination. Neither the language nor the meaning of the Freedom of Information Act, the court concluded, could be construed to define or classify those objects as federal records. Yet the ruling cannot be considered as controlling relationships between artifacts and federal records. Although the court declared that a body of "documentary materials" does not include physical objects of a nonwritten or nontextual character, it remains an unresolved matter whether archivists should accord or deny an artifact the formal legal status of a federal record.

In addition to considering the problems of identifying and defining artifacts, it is useful to review past accessioning practices. First, in what before October 1988 formed the Military Archives Division (NNM), accessioning activity associated with many of the closed or relatively inactive record groups has virtually ceased. From 1935 to 1975, hundreds of artifacts came into the National Archives along with textual records relating to the Revolutionary War and especially with those War Department records of the nineteenth century. Since 1975, that accessioning activity has slackened or stopped altogether simply because the accessioning of textual records associated with those record groups has itself ended or nearly ended. For the formerly established Civil Archives Division (NNF), the opposite trend developed. From 1935 to 1960, the accessioning of artifacts

occurred more slowly than in the Military Archives Division. Yet from 1960 to 1978 relatively larger numbers of artifacts came into the custody of NNF than NNM.

Second, little of this accessioning activity arose in consequence of required scheduling or deliberate planning. In 1978 the National Archives obtained a Record of Dead Letters (1777-78) from the Smithsonian Institution. With the notable exceptions of artifacts acquired and accumulated as part of separate collections of private gifts to various modern United States presidents and as gift offers, nearly all the accessioning of artifacts occurred in conjunction with the accessioning of textual records. Third, most of the agencies that transferred records to the National Archives also sent, usually inadvertently, numbers of artifacts. Fourth, an examination of past practices shows that virtually all the artifacts accessioned came in the same boxes or cartons which contained textual records; no separately accompanying shipments of artifacts arrived in the period before 1978. More recently, however, NNF acquired several crates containing material objects relating to the work of the Warren Commission (Record Group 272, Records of the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy). The relative absence of separate accessioning of artifacts has resulted from the standard accessioning policy of textual custodial units: they have generally discouraged gift offers of artifacts from private donors and federal agencies.

The final section of this part of the discussion

concerns a determination of the number or quantity of artifacts currently in the custody of NN. Archivists over the past fifteen years have provided only approximate estimates. The obtaining of more exact figures proved impracticable because archivists and technicians continued to discover large numbers of artifacts while they engaged concurrently in preparing descriptions of record series and in performing holdings maintenance work on textual records. In other instances, reference service archivists made unexpected discoveries in the course of searching records, while even researchers often uncovered concealed objects. Notwithstanding the random discoveries, those same archivists have used a wide variety of aids to assist them in compiling reasonably accurate figures, including the periodically revised ABC List of Record Groups, division and branch administrative files (especially the GSA Forms 6710 and 6710A), branch-specific finding aids, inventories, appraisal reports, and card indexes. Accordingly, since 1975 archivists have systematically determined the number of artifacts in the custody of NN.

Reflecting a part of this effort, in 1976 an archivist prepared a list of the number of artifacts for each record group in the custody of the Military Archives--the number of artifacts aggregated 401. Then in 1978 a substantial reduction in the number of artifacts occurred in consequence of the transfer of many objects to the Smithsonian Institution and this simplified the task of accounting for the remaining number of artifacts in both NNM and NNF. In any event, the November 1988 edition of the

ABC List showed that NN had 1,663 artifacts in its custody (excluding those at WNRC and at NN field branches), a quantity amounting to 98 cubic feet. Only 270 artifacts remained in the custody of NNM--reflecting the considerable diminution as a result of the 1978 transfers while the rest of the objects remained in the custody of NNF. In the Military Archives Division, NNMP held most of the artifacts associated with military records, while NNFJ of NNF controlled most of the material objects relating to civilian agency and other federal records.

In verifying these figures I discovered a generally accurate correlation between the ABC List estimates and those reflected in division and branch files. Yet I also discovered substantial discrepancies between the ABC List figures and the rough numerical determinations made by supervisory archivists. The essential point is that any new branch-produced and revised artifacts inventories should show appreciable statistical changes when compared to the 1988 ABC List figures. Moreover, NNT has assigned the task of preparing a comprehensive artifacts inventory in conjunction with extensive textual record series identification and description to the Records Relocation Branch (NNTR). The inventory should necessitate substantial numerical revisions to the current ABC List artifacts figures. A part of the discrepancy can be explained by additional unanticipated discoveries of artifacts included among textual records. The quantitative difference will principally be accounted for,

however, by a more careful checking and correcting by archivists of division and branch files estimates against the current ABC List figures. Moreover, archivists should conduct a more meticulous preliminary tabulation of those unidentified and undescribed artifacts that they should identify among textual records not yet archivally processed.

Finally, many artifacts could be added to the ABC List figures if they could be located. One archivist pointed out that the Bibles of Revolutionary War soldiers could be found in either 14W2 or 7E2 in the National Archives building, while a stub book of the famous Lewis and Clark expedition--apparently heretofore unaccounted for in the former NNM administrative files--can be located somewhere in 20W3. In the case of the artifacts contained in specially protected facilities, most notably in the "Treasure Room" which provides storage for invaluable records and artifacts dating back to the Revolutionary War period, an itemized count of artifacts is feasible. For most of the objects, though, there is no system of individual item level characterization or numerical designation and this complicates the tabulation problem. In short, some improved and more systematic method of identifying artifacts should be devised, particularly if the objects are to be removed to Archives II.

Based upon the previous discussion, the general categorization of the content and uses of artifacts should be considered. The National Archives contains artifacts of a fundamentally documentary character, of an essentially

illustrative or aesthetic nature, or of a basically functional or commemorative class. These types of artifacts can be readily identified from division or branch-produced inventories of three-dimensional objects, broken down by individual record group; from original appraisal memoranda or from GSA Form 6710s; or from special lists prepared by textual custodial units or by archivists with responsibility for maintaining specially protected records and artifacts facilities.

Nevertheless, an astonishing variety of different kinds of artifacts can be found within each of these broad categories. In the documentary category, the National Archives has an official stamp used by the Secretary General at the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nurenberg, Germany, after World War II. This item, originally scheduled for transfer to the Smithsonian Institution in 1978 but subsequently retained by the National Archives, showed sanction for administrative actions taken by the IMT in prosecuting Nazi war criminals. An artifact of this type can thus be considered to constitute a record. Similarly, those items associated with the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy also document the federal government's use of tangible objects in its investigations of the criminal activity of political assassins and their real or alleged accomplices. Federal law officers have used many of these documentary type artifacts consequently as forensic or courtroom exhibits. Notable examples include Lee Harvey Oswald's rifle and the Bible and blood-stained handkerchief of a black West Point

cadet tried in the late 1800s for accusing fellow cadets of racial harassment and persecution.

The second category of artifacts--those of an essentially illustrative or aesthetic nature or quality--also includes diverse types of items. Representative of these artifacts are Works Progress Administration-produced color paintings of the North Pole, Revolutionary War fracturs, a decorative Samoan straw mat that enclosed a diplomatic treaty between the United States and Samoa in the 1870s, and the watercolor drawings of artists who accompanied Commodore Matthew B. Perry's expeditions to Japan and Africa in the 1850s. The last major category of artifacts includes those objects of a primarily functional or commemorative nature, though usually the artifacts of this class also have important documentary values. Such items are represented by the miscellaneous objects contained in the Consolidated Correspondence File of Record Group 92, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, and in several series of Record Group 94, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917. The two record groups contain large numbers of functional and commemorative type artifacts such as chevrons and other uniform insignia, a Civil War soldier's mittens, War of 1812 period cloth samples, assorted medals of honor, a captured Mexican Army battle flag, and even tattered fragments of the Rebel flag that surmounted the Confederate Capitol in Richmond in 1865. These objects demonstrate or illustrate how a federal agency accomplished its mission or memorialize some event or

transaction in which the government had some significant policy interest or involvement.

A closely related subject to that of artifacts types is the various uses that archivists have made of three dimensional objects and the types of administrative and archival transactions that have affected the status of artifacts. The principal uses and transactions have included reference, exhibits and loans, and transfers. A centrally developed and uniformly applied policy has not governed or guided reference use and activity. Rather, NN has permitted custodial units to establish different reference policies, procedures, and standards. NNM has never adopted a set reference policy. Yet the branch established definite guidelines and enforced specific restrictions. For example, researchers interested in viewing certain military artifacts have rarely gained access to stack areas where such objects are stored. Yet a few researchers have received permission to view the collection of alleged Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) associated with the records of "Project Blue Book." Occasionally, archivists have shown researchers the photographs of objects included among textual records or else stored separately in archival boxes. In these situations NNM has had difficulty in explaining to researchers that NNPD is not technically equipped to photograph three-dimensional objects or to handle more difficult copying problems. In some instances, archivists have sent artifacts to research rooms (both in 13W and the Central Research Room) to satisfy a researcher's request, including unique and rare items

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such as a bound volume containing original designs for the Confederate flag.

In NNF the absence of a controlling NN artifacts reference policy also led to the establishment of individual custodial unit access and use practices and procedures. In contrast to NNM, since 1965 the amount of reference use of artifacts in NNF has proved greater. For instance, in 1968 Life magazine photographed the physical objects included among the records of the Warren Commission, including Lee Harvey Oswald's rifle. Subsequently, correspondent Charles Osgood and a film crew of CBS News inspected a collection of material objects to produce a program that featured artifacts at the National Archives. Indeed, by 1982 reference use of artifacts in NNFJ grew so heavy that the branch abruptly terminated the policy of regular access; thereafter, the unit adopted a more limited reference use policy to ensure the efficient performance of its services to researchers requesting textual records. NNF subsequently implemented a screening process, limiting access to artifacts to "serious-minded" researchers only--professional journalists and photographers mainly--and permitting only the photographing of objects, excluding any physical handling of artifacts. Thus, the considerations of efficiency of reference service and reliability of security and preservation of physical objects formed a more restrictive access policy. In further contrast to NNM, in the 1980s NNF consistently refused to permit researchers to view artifacts in the stacks, with exceptions

made for congressional staff members and constituents from congressional districts. Moreover, NNF branches did not send segregated objects to the Central Research Room, as NNM units did, because of the security concern and the difficulty of handling and moving unwieldy artifacts. Arising in part from the stringent enforcement of these restrictions by NNF earlier in the 1980s, by late 1988 the amount of reference use of NNF artifacts considerably declined.

Besides their usefulness for research, artifacts lend themselves to exhibit use, both within the National Archives and as display items loaned to private institutions or other federal agencies. Ironically, where both NNM and NNF previously exercised broad authority earlier in the 1980s in limiting the access of individual researchers to those artifacts in the stacks, both divisions also concurrently cooperated in frequently making those same objects available for public viewing. NNMP, in addition to furnishing photographic prints of court-martial exhibits to researchers, provided the Office of Public Programs (NE) with a Seal of the Knights of the Golden Circle--an allegedly disloyal pro-Confederate conspiratorial group in the Civil War North--and a Confederate cipher disk.

Artifacts have therefore served reference and exhibit purposes of NN and NE staff, but archivists have also transferred objects directly to the Smithsonian Institution. To illustrate, from 1977 to 1979 there occurred a succession of transfers of numbers of artifacts--objects formerly in the custody of NNM and

NNF--to the Smithsonian. The transfer of artifacts in 1978 involved two Japanese ceremonial swords, a wooden sword case, an 1845 American flag of the ship Cyprus, 1834 Indian commercial trade cloth samples, a World War II period Russian helmet, a U.S. 77th Infantry Division flag, and a German swastika flag. Representatives of both the National Archives and the Smithsonian Institution executed the transaction by duly signing an instrument of transfer.

Based upon such a survey of the principal uses and transactions involving artifacts, I recommend an improved identification and description of artifacts. Otherwise a central location for artifacts at Archives II would substantially increase the practical research value and use of artifacts. In my judgment, a centrally developed and uniformly applied reference service policy--one governing procedures in all NN custodial units--should be adopted and implemented at Archives II. Whatever retrieval and delivery methods that reference archivists should decide to use, the continuing concerns over the security of valuable material objects, the special associational relationships existing between artifacts and textual records, and the physical integrity of artifacts should be considered as permanent standards.

Regarding the exhibit, loan, and transfer of artifacts, I recommend that NN staff continue these practices but that archivists implement them more selectively. National Archives artifacts should not be used as museum pieces to illustrate a

national historical theme, but should rather be used to document the functioning of a federal agency within the framework of an exceptionally significant American historical experience. NN custodial archivists should make the loan of objects contingent upon NE's clear understanding and strict application of this distinction. Moreover, NN should continue to exercise the right to approve or disapprove NE-proposed exhibits that would be composed primarily of artifacts drawn from the holdings of NN custodial units. As to transfers, the National Archives should make an early determination to transfer a substantial number of artifacts to the Smithsonian, to other institutions, or possibly to federal agencies which have museum divisions. This decision reflects the recognition that a large proportion of artifacts at the National Archives are virtually unidentifiable and lack significant associational relationship to any specific series of textual records. Upon completion of its inventorying project, NNTR should submit to NN accurate lists of those objects which cannot be identified or described in terms of an originating agency. These miscellaneous objects should then be transferred or discarded before the removal of records and other artifacts to Archives II. The artifacts that remain will thus be brought under greater intellectual control and will be handled with a view to better description, easier access, and expanded reference or exhibit use.

In short, I recommend a systematic but selective elimination of superfluous, extraneous, and historically insignificant

artifacts by means of more accurate inventorying and more extensive reappraisal. To this end, NNTR should coordinate the entire operation. National Archives artifacts exist in large numbers but are rarely recognized or practically used. To remedy this situation I urge the removal of worthless items, properly justified and approved by originating federal agencies, and the enhancement of the remaining objects. Concerning preservation, I recommend that each custodial unit carry out a comprehensive preservation survey of artifacts in conjunction with NNPD specialists, establish treatment strategies where necessary, and prepare guidelines for the physical removal of artifacts to Archives II. More thoroughly describing those artifacts having permanent value will be a futile exercise if their physical condition deteriorates or if they should suffer damage or destruction in transit to Archives II because of a fragmented, brittle, or delicate condition.

The final consideration of this part of the essay concerns the level of intellectual control that NN custodial units have exercised over the artifacts in their custody. A unit has generally maintained this type of control by its preparation and periodic revision of descriptive formats and a variety of finding aids, indexes, and inventories. In addition, NN units have regularly verified the numbers of artifacts in their respective custody, contributing to the updating of the artifacts numbers or figures provided in the ABC List of Record Groups. The essential question nevertheless is: How completely or inadequately are

artifacts described and otherwise brought under intellectual control in NN units? Varying levels of control exist. In NNM the description of military artifacts is inadequate on an item level, yet a more detailed descriptive effort would be impracticable and unnecessary. Generally, the description of these artifacts is sufficient as to types of three-dimensional objects. Moreover, NNM archivists in the early 1970s completed an artifacts inventory that has remained adequately descriptive of the those artifacts. In the inventory, NNM artifacts are arranged under fifteen corresponding record groups and thereunder are designated by item number. Each individually itemized object is briefly identified, assigned a file reference number--consisting of record group entry number and document sequence numbers--and its building and stack locations are shown. Archivists have also annotated the inventory lists to show which artifacts the Smithsonian Institution accessioned in 1978. NNM has long exercised close intellectual control over Treasure Room artifacts. By the end of the 1970s two archivists completed preparation of an extended card file inventory for objects contained in the Military Vault. As the card file is organized, there are four boxes containing cards that are arranged by a simple numbering system. Individual artifacts are identified and assigned a file reference number (e.g., 92-56B-449), and are arranged by record group. The cards also indicate the exact stack and shelf locations of the objects within the Military Vault.

Based on this information, it is apparent that National

Archives artifacts are inadequately described in the various inventories, finding aids, and descriptive documentation prepared by custodial units prior to the NN reorganization of 1988. Greater intellectual control over the artifacts is needed because important decisions to transfer or destroy artifacts cannot be judiciously made if archivists are not fully informed as to what objects they have and particularly as to what relationships the artifacts bear, if any, to textual records. Reappraisal of artifacts requires a more thorough description. Therefore, newly completed artifacts inventories should be prepared by NNTR or by individual textual projects units and the combined informational results should be considered in the possible development of an artifacts data element for Format X in conjunction with the Archival Information System.

The last part of the essay deals with storage arrangements and security considerations covering artifacts at the National Archives and prospectively at Archives II. The discussion focuses on two central issues: the segregation of artifacts from textual records and the preservation of artifacts in specially protected facilities. At the moment artifacts at the National Archives occupy a wide variety of physical environments. In both NNM and NNF stack areas and in special vaults under their custody, artifacts in large numbers are stored in assorted archives boxes and interfiled with textual records, packed in enclosed wooden crates, lying exposed on stack shelves, or placed separately in boxes or other containers in vaults.

The different types of storage reflect the two most significant issues previously raised: the problem of maintaining the relationship between three-dimensional objects and textual records and the difficulty of protecting isolated and unidentified artifacts. An assessment of the situation in both divisions revealed a continuation of these problems and identified the different views of archivists concerning the most effective approach to solving these problems. In NNM, artifacts are stored by various means and in widely different locations, from the centrally-located Treasure Room to individual boxes in stack areas. Despite this, my survey demonstrated that present artifacts storage arrangements are adequate and secure. The situation is particularly true for NNM which has regularly maintained and inspected the specially protected records and artifacts stored in the Treasure Room. The Military Vault, located in 7W2A, is combination-locked, is entered only by two or more archivists for an inspection survey, and access is limited to three staff members who have the combination number to the stack lock. Moreover, registration logs are maintained by staff members who, besides closely supervised researchers, are required to sign the logs. The Military Vault provides a model for the centralized depository that could be used for artifacts storage at Archives II. Otherwise, NN should continue to implement the approved policy of selective removal and relocation of accessioned artifacts. The set of associational and illustrative values derived from accompanying textual records

bulks large as an archival consideration, but artifacts should be placed in a central location. Such a policy would also facilitate transfers and exhibits. A combination of a more complete inventorying and description, a more systematic cross-referencing practice, and the consolidation of artifacts into an aggregate group would make the artifacts more accessible and usable.

The last section of this essay deals with the question of what the National Archives should do with artifacts with respect to Archives II. Records managers should first determine how many artifacts should be removed to Archives II. First, NN should instruct NNT to consolidate and submit the results of newly prepared or updated division or branch-level artifacts inventories, or should assign responsibility directly to NNTR for the development of a comprehensive NN-wide artifacts inventory. Second, NN should adopt as controlling artifacts policy the formulations and options presented in the Report of the Committee on Holdings Maintenance (1985-86). Third, NN should direct the branch chiefs of the Textual Projects Division to supervise a systematic survey of the artifacts inventoried and to submit separate lists of those objects that should be preserved, transferred, or destroyed. The branch chiefs would also consult with conservators on disposition issues. Fourth, NN should thereafter authorize implementation of the disposition decisions of branch chiefs, exercising the final authority to approve or overrule the determinations. Fifth, NN should direct NNTR,

supported by NN-B, to prepare logistical plans to relocate artifacts connected with textual records that are to remain at the main building should stay downtown, while the objects associated with the textual records to be removed to College Park should be relocated to Archives II. Supervisory archivists should execute the plans and have archivists prepare new inventories identifying and enumerating those artifacts located in both buildings for the record groups over which they have authority. Sixth, NN should ensure that those artifacts to be removed to Archives II are stored in two separate division vaults and one central vault. Specifically, the architectural design of Archives II should include plans for three vaults. There should be a civil, military, and central vault. Those civil artifacts considered as permanently valuable should be sent directly to a central vault. Permanent military artifacts should also be stored in a central artifacts room that would be climate-controlled and specially-protected.

The implementation of this architectural plan could proceed in the following manner. Those artifacts that are appraised as permanent and all newly accessioned or discovered objects should be stored in the respective division vaults. Upon a determination by archivists at the main building or at Archives II that a newly acquired artifact should be permanently preserved, then that object should be placed in the central vault. Those items that are placed in a division vault by archivists or holdings maintenance technicians--through those staff members with exclusive access to the vaults--and determined subsequently to be disposable should thereafter be transferred or destroyed. In short, the division vaults would serve as temporary chambers or intermediate holding rooms. The central vault would form the repository for permanently valuable artifacts.

Architects should develop detailed design specifications regarding the configuration, size, and special storage facilities and shelving arrangements. Ideally, the vaults should accomodate approximately one-half to three-fifths of the artifacts in the National Archives. This amount of space will contain all the artifacts presently stored separately (or, excluding those currently interfiled with textual records in archives boxes) in the main building and those objects that will be removed from textual records in succeeding years. Also, all artifacts hereafter discovered in the records at WNRC and identified by archivists as permanently valuable should be preserved at WNRC and forwarded with appropriate textual records to Archives II. Should the objects be found among records that will indefinitely be stored at WNRC--for example, unscheduled records or those not

scheduled for transfer for a extended period--then they should be separately inventoried and maintained at WNRC until the transfer of textual records to the new building is finally accomplished. In sum, three vaults at Archives II should more efficiently utilize space than the scattered dispositions and storage arrangements of three-dimensional objects currently located at the National Archives building. The upgraded arrangements should ensure improved intellectual control; make possible increased preservation, reference, and exhibit uses; and facilitate disposal actions connected with artifacts. Nevertheless, the success of this improved handling of artifacts will depend heavily on the ability of NN, NN-B, and branch chiefs in NNT to formulate plans and coordinate activities to prepare those artifacts deemed permanently valuable for relocation in Archives II.

The artifacts at the National Archives have potentially much greater value as objects that document an illustrate significant functions performed by federal agencies over the past two centuries. To some extent they are neglected because they exist in virtual oblivion. The National Archives should rectify this situation by eliminating a great number of worthless and useless objects, transfer to museums or sell to antique dealers those that are monetarily or aesthetically valuable but which lack significant documentary values, and discard or destroy miscellaneous or otherwise materially unstable items. More important, the National Archives should enhance the remaining collection of its truly valuable artifacts by preparing to remove a substantial proportion of them to Archives II. There, researchers and archivists alike may yet recognize their unique historical value and rightful place in the National Archives.